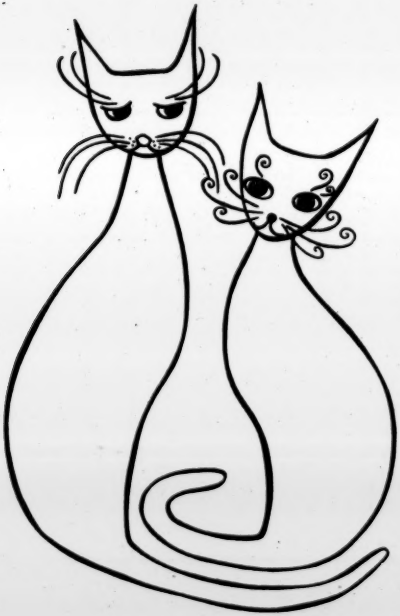
THE LADDER

November 50¢



purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications—this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization.

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COVER BY KATHY ROGERS

EDITORIAL

The Four-Letter Word

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS THE WORD - A FOUR-LETTER WORD (OR SO WE WERE TOLD). A COMEDIAN WAS ARRESTED IN SAN FRANCISCO FOR USING IT IN HIS NIGHT CLUB ACT.

IN THE END THE FOUR-LETTER WORD TURNED OUT TO BE TEN LETTERS. IT GREW AS THE TALK GREW. SO NOW IT APPEARS THAT THE WORD (WHICH PERTAINED TO A CERTAIN ASPECT OF HOMOSEXUALITY) IS A HYPHENATED WORD. NO ONE HAS COME OUT WITH THE WORD SINCE FOR FEAR OF DRAWING THE SAME PENALTY AS THE COMEDIAN, SO WE CAN ONLY CONJECTURE AS TO WHAT IT WAS. WE JUST CAN'T BE COCKSURE ABOUT IT AT ALL.

BUT BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE ARRESTING OFFICER WAS HIGHLY INCENSED BY ITS USAGE. "I WOULDN'T WANT MY CHILDREN TO HEAR THAT," HE DECRIED.

NOW THAT WAS A VERY SENSIBLE AND SOUND ARGUMENT INDEED AND SHOULD HOLD UP WELL IN THE COURTS. THE ACT APPEARED AS PART OF A NIGHT CLUB SHOW, TO WHICH ONLY ADULTS, 21 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER, WERE ADMITTED. SO WE ARE LEFT WONDERING JUST WHAT AGE THE OFFICER'S "KIDS" ARE - 25, 33, OR POSSIBLY 40? AND HOW LONG DOES THE OFFICER EXPECT TO PROTECT HIS "KIDS" FROM THE FACTS OF LIFE? IS HE QUITE CERTAIN THAT HIS "KIDS" HAVEN'T HEARD THE TERM BEFORE-AND ARE PERHAPS PROTECTING HIM?

THIS IS THE THIRD SENSATIONAL CASE OF CENSORSHIP IN RECENT YEARS IN SAN FRANCISCO WHERE THE CODE OF SO-CALLED DECENCY HAS BEEN DEFINED AT THE LEVEL OF WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR THE CHILDREN. "WE MUST PROTECT OUR YOUTH", WE ARE TOLD AS A BLANKET ARGUMENT OR MEASURE OF OBSCENITY, ACCORDING TO THE CHILD-LIKE MINDS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT - DESPITE COURT RULINGS TO THE CONTRARY.

IN THE CASE OF HOWL, THE NOW RENOWNED POEM BY ALLEN GINSBERG, JUDGE CLAYTON W. HORN VERY CLEARLY STATED IN HIS OPINION THE FOLLOWING RULES IN DETERMINING WHAT IS OR IS NOT OBSCENE:

"1. IF THE MATERIAL HAS THE SLIGHTEST REDEEMING SOCIAL IMPORTANCE IT IS NOT OBSCENE BECAUSE IT IS PROTECTED BY THE FIRST AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION, AND THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION.

2. IF IT DOES NOT HAVE THE SLIGHTEST REDEEMING SOCIAL IMPORTANCE IT MAY BE OBSCENE.

3. THE TEST OF OBSCENITY IN CALIFORNIA IS THAT THE MATERIAL MUST HAVE A TENDENCY TO DEPRAVE OR CORRUPT READERS BY EXCITING LASCIVIOUS THOUGHTS OR AROUSING LUSTFUL DESIRE TO THE POINT THAT IT PRESENTS A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER OF INCITING TO ANTI-SOCIAL OR IMMORAL ACTION.

4. THE BOOK OR MATERIAL MUST BE JUDGED AS A WHOLE BY ITS EFFECT ON THE AVERAGE ADULT IN THE COMMUNITY.

5. IF THE MATERIAL IS OBJECTIONABLE ONLY BECAUSE OF COARSE AND VULGAR LANGUAGE WHICH IS NOT EROTIC OR APHRODISIAC IN CHARACTER IT IS NOT OBSCENE."

IT WOULD SEEM TO US THAT THE WORD IS THE WORD - WHETHER WRITTEN OR SPOKEN - AND THAT THE SAME TEST SHOULD APPLY TO BOTH. JUDGE HORN CLEARLY STATED THAT THE MATERIAL SHOULD BE JUDGED "BY ITS EFFECT ON THE AVERAGE ADULT". THIS DEFINITELY TAKES THE CASE OUT OF THE REALM OF THE CHILD OR JUVENILE, AND IT MUST BE TRIED AT THE ADULT LEVEL. REGARDLESS, THE WORD IN THIS CASE WAS USED IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT, SPOKEN BY AN ADULT BEFORE AN ADULT AUDIENCE.

HOWEVER, IF THE ARRESTING OFFICER IS TRULY CONCERNED WITH THE "PROTECTION OF OUR YOUTH", AND IF THERE DOES EXIST A PROBLEM OF KEEPING "ADULT" READING AND ENTERTAINMENT OUT OF THE REACH OF THE CHILDREN, THERE MUST BE A MORE DIRECT APPROACH TO SOLVING THE SITUATION. WE SUGGEST THAT A DIFFERENTIATION BE MADE BETWEEN ADULT AND JUVENILE ENTERTAINMENT AND READING AND THAT A CITY ORDINANCE MIGHT BE PASSED REQUIRING THAT CERTAIN MATERIAL BE LABELED "FOR ADULTS ONLY". THE LADDER, FOR INSTANCE, IS CIRCULATED FOR "ADULT" READING AND IS NOT INTENDED AS SUITABLE MATERIAL FOR JUVENILES.

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS THE WORD - A FOUR-LETTER WORD. IT WAS CALLED "LOVE". IT HAS LOST MUCH OF ITS MEANING AND MOST OF ITS MESSAGE BECAUSE THE PHYSICAL EXPRESSION OF LOVE - SEX - HAS BE-

COME THE FOUR-LETTER WORD OF OUR SOCIETY (SOME PEOPLE CAN'T COUNT!). WE DO NOT SERVE OUR YOUTH, OUR FUTURE ADULT SOCIETY, BY REGRESSING TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE STORK. LOVE IS. SEX IS. TRUE, THERE ARE VARIATIONS OF EXPRESSION OF THESE WORDS, SOME OF WHICH, WE GRANT, ARE NOT ALWAYS IN GOOD TASTE. BUT CRIME, AND NOT THE PALATE, IS THE CONCERN OF THE POLICEMAN ON THE BEAT.

"NO ONE WAS EVER RAPED BY A BOOK; NOR WAS ANYONE EVER CORRUPTED BY A STAND-UP COMIC'S ROUTINE," DECLARED RALPH J. GLEASON, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE COLUMNIST.

BUT A COSMOPOLITAN, SOPHISTICATED CITY IS BEING RAPED AND RAVISHED BY THE ARTIFICIAL STANDARD OF THE FAIRY TALE. IN THE END, SAN FRANCISCO WILL BE KNOWN AS "THE CITY WHO USED TO KNOW HOW".

- DEL MARTIN

Current Research Trends

A star-studded program of speakers appearing at the Mattachine Society of New York's convention during the Labor Day week end was listed in the October issue of THE LADDER. We regretted at the time that was all the information we had to offer our readers, but since have been able to obtain detailed reports on two of the speakers.

Mr. Isadore Rubin, assistant publisher of Sexology Magazine presented a critique of research on homosexuality in his address "Review of Research During the Past Twenty Years".

Describing the Kinsey Report as "an important turning point", Mr. Rubin commended the authors success in considering the subject matter on its own merit and their attempt to meet the important need to determine the incidence of homosexuality.

Reviewing the history of research on homosexuality, Mr. Rubin felt one might discern an obvious relationship between the research findings and the composition of the sample studied. The 1930's saw the heyday of environmental explanations of homosexuality, supported by examples from Domestic Court, welfare agencies and charity institutions. In the 1940's and 1950's, with increasing interest in psychological interpreta-

tions, there emerged a picture of homosexuality as an "emotional disturbance" supported by studies based on samples of prisoners and psychiatric patients. However, an increasing interest in the interaction of society and the homosexual may be recognized in the mid and late 1950's.

Dr. Robert C. Robertiello in "Voyage from Lesbos" produced the first full case history of the female homosexual available to the general public, observed Mr. Rubin. This seems to have initiated the individual case history trend, or what might be called "specimen collection".

Mr. Rubin praised Dr. Evelyn Hooker of U.C.L.A. who attempted to avoid the pitfalls of the "captive audience sample" in her two-volume study of "the homosexual as he lives in the community and not in the psychologists office". Mr. Rubin felt that Dr. Hooker's work conclusively demonstrated that many prevalent myths about homosexuality were erroneous.

Reviewing the current status of physiological theories of homosexuality, Mr. Rubin stated that there existed "overwhelming evidence" against glandular imbalance as the fundamental explanation of human homosexuality. Studies on body build indicate this too is of little or no importance. Magnus Hirshfeld believed to have established evidence of a genetic explanation of homosexuality based on a small sample of identical twins, but subsequent studies did not sustain his findings. Psychoanalytic explanations, such as the postulation of a fixation at the oral level, for the most part remain as interesting but unproven hypotheses.

"We are not in a position to make generalizations about homosexuality," Mr. Rubin concluded. He warned that much current opinion is merely a matter of substituting terms, "new wine in old bottles", as for example, "sick" for "morally depraved". Mr. Rubin insisted that any hypothesis, to be proven valid, must be tested using representative samples and control groups. Unless these exceedingly difficult, but necessary, conditions are fulfilled the theory remains mere conjecture.

Dr. Benjamin Karpman, chief psychotherapist of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D. C., delivered the convention's feature address entitled "Unconscious Homosexuality". Frequently introducing his concepts in the guise of humor-

ous anecdotes, the speaker stressed that basically all people are alike.

The human personality need not be probed deeply to uncover inklings of its homosexual components, he contended, "Homosexuality pervades our entire lives...without exception!" Dr. Karpman drew liberally from his long professional experience to illustrate unconscious homosexuality expressed in such diverse forms as transvestism, alcoholism, fetishism, paranoia and war.

Dr. Karpman suggested that, much as we need to know what homosexuality is, we must recognize that much of what we are telling and what is being told is cultural, superficial, and systematizing, but it is not fundamental knowledge. Though Stekel and Freud recorded hundreds of case histories, even they failed to really touch the heart of the problem, Dr. Karpman said, explaining that these brilliant analytic pioneers seldom saw cases under age five. Homosexuality should properly be studied under pediatrics, he asserted, "Homosexuality should be considered a childhood disease!" Dr. Karpman hoped to review the original records of cases thought completed and revaluate the raw materials in the light of subsequent knowledge. He predicted the probable discovery of important information of a significance not originally recognized.

Having studied numerous cases of Lesbianism, Dr. Karpman commented, "This I know, children are not born perverted, they acquire it in their early years. . . were we to ask any of the Lesbians here why they are what they are they could not say because they do not know. It happened when they were too young to know.

So much hostility arises from rejection and we don't know how to handle our hostilities," he exclaimed, leading the audience to establish the inference.

Dr. Karpman predicted that in the future more research activity will be directed to the study of the female pelvis. "The female pelvis is a remarkable thing where dynamic activities such as menstruation and ovulation are constantly occuring. The menstruation may be light, it may be irregular, it may be infrequent, but no female homosexual can escape it. ...By comparison the male pelvis is insignificant; yet not

enough emphasis has been placed on this fundamental difference," Dr. Karpman remarked.

"We are only on the threshold of the mind," Dr. Karpman stated as a commentary and a prediction. Given another twenty-five years and another Freud, Dr. Karpman thought we might be able to say something authorative.

- K. L. and M. G.

Lesbian Artist: ROSA BONHEUR

In 1895 Rosa Bonheur was made an officer of the "Legion of Honor," France's highest honor. She was the first woman to be so honored. With the exception of Sapphu, no admittedly Lesbian woman ever received the unanimous acclaim that Rosa Bonheur did in her lifetime.

Rosa Bonheur was born in 1822. Her father, Raymond Bonheur, was an art teacher and her mother, Sophie Marquis Bonheur, had been his pupil. As a child Rosa's father permitted her to study art in his all-male class, an unheard-of-thing at that time. She was immediately recognized as a talented artist while very young and some of her biographies mention that when she was older she adopted male clothing in order to be able to frequent market places and paint undisturbed. However, the facts show that Rosa adopted male garb before she left her earliest teens. There is a color reproduction of a portrait of Rosa Bonheur by the famous French artist Corot in the art periodical "International Studio," v.97, p.51, December, 1930, which shows Rosa as a girl of perhaps 13 or 14 dressed fully as a boy.

Raymond Bonheur was a follower of the "Saint Simonian" movement in France, which held ideas similar to the "Womens' Rights" movement in America. It is not surprising that Rosa Bonheur had a more liberal home atmosphere than many of her contemporaries.

At the beginning of her adult career, Rosa Bonheur formed an ardent attachment with Nathalie Micas. Nathalie Micas and her mother, Mme. Micas, lived at "By" with Rosa. Mme. Micas was Rosa Bonheur's housekeeper and these three women lived together until Nathalie Micas died in 1889. The

biography and autobiography entitled, REMINISCENCES OF ROSA BONHEUR, edited by Theodore Stanton, N. Y., Appleton, 1910, gives an account of their life together.

An intensely talented woman, Rosa Bonheur filled her life with successive artistic triumphs. Her beautiful canvasses hang in all the great museums of the world. A single listing of her more famous animal canvasses would fill a dozen pages. Probably the celebrated "Horse Fair" is her best known work. For her period she was a powerful personality and without ostentation she calmly ignored all of the conventions she personally found unnecessary. She used tobacco which was definitely not considered proper for a woman to use under any circumstances. In 1857 the Secretary-General of France issued a permit to Rosa Bonheur which allowed her to dress as a man legally. On one occasion a male friend teased her about going around in the company of men unchaperoned and she replied, "Oh, my dear Sir, if you knew how little I care for your sex, you would not get any ideas in your head. The fact is, in the way of males, I like only the bulls I paint." On another occasion when Miss Bonheur was dressed as a woman a policeman noticed her short hair and free and easy manners and arrested her, thinking she was a man dressed as a woman. He was most chagrined to be introduced to the then most Famous French artist by his own superiors.

The culmination of her artistic career was her presentation of the Cross of the "Legion of Honor" by the Empress Eugenie. Miss Bonheur lived only four years after that, but her few remaining years were enriched by the companship of a young American artist, Anna E. Klumpke. Rosa Bonheur's letters to friends make it clear that Miss Klumpke helped ease her loneliness, but Rosa never again was as happy and free as she was when Nathalie Micas lived. Rosa Bonheur followed her beloved friend into death in 1899.

Always a prolific writer, she left a just and accurate summation of her life in one of her letters: "I have no patience with women who ask permission to think. Let women establish their claim by great and good works, and not by conventions."

- Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

Here and There

Miss Jesse Margaret Cook, a firm believer in equal rights for women, left in her will a $25,000 trust fund to aid any woman who suffers because of inequalities under the law. Additional grants, according to Associated Press under a Baltimore dateline, were made to support the equal rights amendment to the U. S. Constitution and further equality for women in civil and economic rights.

* * * * *

Earlier this year some 360 delegates to the YMCA's annual model legislature met in Sacramento, California. 17-year old Terry Wade of San Rafael as acting Governor signed the first bill of the three-day session - a measure to release sex offenders from registration requirement after 10 years without convictions.

* * * * *

In Hollywood, the Motion Picture Association, representing most of the important movie makers, changed its production code to permit the subject of sex deviation on the screen. To which Hedda Hopper, Hollywood columnist, promptly replied, "Well, all I've got to say is that our producers shouldn't have any trouble with casting."

* * * * *

The "Medicolegal Digest" reports that a husband sought a divorce on the ground of extreme cruelty consisting of his wife's maintenance of an active homosexual relationship. In H. vs. H., 157 A.2 721 (1960), the Superior Court of New Jersey found as a fact that the wife engaged in such activities and that her conduct had a harmful effect upon the husband. The Court said:

> "While the question as to whether active and continuous homosexuality constitutes extreme cruelty is new to our courts, we have no doubt about it on principle, granted a justified factual basis in the

particular case for a conclusion that the defendant's activity endangers the life or health of the aggrieved party, or renders his or her life one of such extreme discomfort and wretchedness as to incapacitate him or her, physically or mentally, from discharging the marital duties..."

* * * * *

Drew Johnson, editor of "U.S.A. Inside Report," in sending THE LADDER an advance copy of the first issue, suggested, "Our appraisal of homosexuality and its adherents may not be entirely compatible with your own, but we believe that it is based on carefully documented material."

We agree with Mr. Johnson that his appraisal of homosexuality is not compatible with our own. He depicts the homosexual solely as a psychotic capable of murder, violence, viciousness, destruction and moral depredation.

We disagree that Mr. Johnson's material has been carefully documented. He mentions Kinsey, Magnus Hirshfeld and Havelock Ellis in passing, but fails to convey what it was they had to say on the subject.

The magazine is a sensational, scandal-monger type and definitely not worth the price. Don't bother.

* * * * *

Tina Louise will star as Sappho in an Italian-American film, "Sappho, Venus of Lesbos."

* * * * *

The former Boston Area Council of the Mattachine Society reports the existence of the League for the Abolition of Postal Censorship - "a national organization, with paid legal counsel which maintains complete files of all legal briefs which have been filed in such cases and makes briefs available to attorneys throughout the country, consolidates reported violations of civil rights and postal regulations BY THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, and actively lends its financial support to those cases in which the principles involved have implications for other cases."

For anyone interested, the address of the League is Post Office Box 1647, Washington 13, D. C.

* * * * *

Patricia Highsmith (Claire Morgan's) novel on male homosexuality, THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY, has been made into a French movie, The Purple Noon. Reports indicate the homosexuality has been left intact.

* * * * *

California's Penal Code will be reviewed and overhauled for the first time in 90 years...special attention to be given to capital punishment, sex crimes and insanity. The project will take 4 years and the guide is the model penal code assembled by the American Law Institute.

* * * * *

The New York Mattachine is starting a "Quarterly Abstract" on homosexuality that will abstract all articles appearing on the subject in journals in the fields of medicine, law, psychology, and psychiatry. It will be staffed by a group of authorities in this field, among whom is Donald Webster Cory, author of THE HOMOSEXUAL IN AMERICA. It is planned that the first issue will appear late in November. It will be aimed primarily at researchers, libraries and scholars. Subscription rates have not yet been established.

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Readers are invited to contribute items or clippings of interest for publication in this column.

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FRUSTRATION

ALONE, I THREAD MY WAY ALONG THE BUSY, CROWDED STREET
WITH ITS SURGING, PUSHING MULTITUDES AND NOISE OF TRAMPING FEET.
STRANGE FACES FILE PAST; SOME DRAB, SOME EAGER AND BRIGHT-EYED.
BUT ALL ARE IN A WORLD APART, INTENT, SELF-OCCUPIED.
WHAT RANDOM THOUGHTS GO RAMBLING THRU THESE PEOPLE PASSING BY?
ARE SOME, PERCHANCE, AS LONELY AND DESOLATE AS I?
THEIR FACES ARE BUT MASKS THAT HIDE EACH FEELING AND DESIRE,
YET I CAN NOT APPROACH THEM AND ARTLESSLY INQUIRE:
"PRAY TELL ME, WHICH OF YOU AMONG THESE VAST AND TEEMING THRONGS
HAIL FROM THE ISLE OF LESBOS AND RESPOND TO SAPPHIC SONGS?"
HOW MANY OF US MUST PASS BY EACH OTHER DAY BY DAY
UNHEEDED, EACH PURSUING HER OWN BLEAK AND LONELY WAY!
THE SISTERHOOD MAY HAVE NO BADGE; ITS MEMBERS ARE UNKNOWN
AND ONLY FATE DETERMINES IF WE MEET OR WALK ALONE.

V. V.

AFTERMATH

YOUR HEART IS YOUNG. YOUR EYES ARE SAD. YOU ARE ABOVE REPROACH AND YET, LOOKING UP TO IT.

NOTHING SEEMS RIGHT, AND YET YOU REALLY DON'T THINK IT WRONG.

IT'S AN EMOTION MANY FEEL AND ONLY FEW FIND THE ANSWER TO.

YOU THINK YOU KNOW THE ANSWER, BUT DEEP DOWN YOU KNOW YOU NEVER WILL.

YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING LOVED AND YOU DON'T THINK THERE WILL BE ANOTHER DAY, TIME, OR PLACE LIKE THE PRESENT.

YOU FELT THAT SAME URGE IN THE PAST.

YOU WANT TO FEEL IT IN THE FUTURE.

BUT THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER PRESENT. YOU STUMBLED ONTO THE TRUTH SO MANY HAVE SOUGHT.

YOU KNOW THE STRANGLING, YET SOOTHING EMOTION OF WANTING MORE AND MORE OF WHAT YOU KNOW TO BE FORBIDDEN.

M. R. O.

REMEMBERED WEEKEND

ACROSS THE ROOM YOUR EYES MEET MINE...MY HEART IS LISTENING FOR YOUR LAUGHTER. AGAIN I SEE THE RAIN, THE TIPS OF OUR CIGARETTES IN THE NIGHT, TASTE THE RAW OF LIQUOR...I FEEL THE NEAR INTOXICATION OF YOU - AND I AM BLUE. WE SOUGHT AND FOUND A TAINTED HEAVEN IN THE NIGHT...TWO BODIES AND ONE SOUL AT WAR WITHIN ITSELF. WE ARGUE SO WELL TOGETHER...TEARING AND PROBING AT THE MORTAL BEING THAT IS PAST THE POINT OF LOSING. THE MIND IS WEARY, THE RAIN QUICKENS AND THE BOTTLE SMILES A WET SMILE OF VICTORY. DOWN INTO BLACK NOTHINGNESS...THE STUPOR OF SLEEP - UNTIL WE AWAKE TO A SOBER, ACHING DAWN. FIRE WITH SNOW, THE THICKLY BEATING HEART AS IF STRONG BRANDY FILLS THE VEINS, YOU HAVE KNOWN IT ALL BEFORE...THE LOVELY PAIN IS MINE ALONE.

N. A. B.

A Fair Enough Question

A Story by Jay Wallace

"What did you say, Angie?"

"I said that I'm not going to your wedding."

"You're my sister; you've got to go."

"Oh, no, I don't."

"Oh, yes, you do. Aunt Lila will be angry if you don't. Besides, why don't you want to go all of a sudden...?"

"Because I've changed my mind."

"But why, Angie?"

Oh, why! Because a wedding is so damn...heterosexual, that's why!

"For God's sake, Angie!"

"Well, it is! And I'm sick and tired and fed up with heterosexual things; everywhere I look, heterosexual things! Heterosexual people! Heterosexual books! Heterosexual movies! Heterosexual billboards, even!"

"I wonder when this stupid Lesbian phase of yours will end...? You've been at it now for God knows how long, ever since you were in high school. Don't you think it's time you grew up and..."

"It's not a 'phase,' damn it, Dotty! I am a Lesbian, and I'm sick and tired of living in a heterosexual world."

"But be reasonable, Angie; we do live in a heterosexual world; ours is a heterosexual society. You've got to face it."

"How would you like to live in a homosexual society?"

"What?"

"I said how would you like to live in a homosexual society? That's a fair enough question."

"That's a ridiculous question! There never could be such a thing! A homosexual society! How absurd, Angie! Couldn't be...ever."

"Why not?"

"Oh, you know very well 'why not,' Angie! It would be ...immoral, for one thing."

"Am I immoral, Dotty?"

"Well, no...but others would be. Besides, if we didn't have marriages, how could we have children? That's nature, Angie; to get married and have children."

"That's your nature, Dot...but not mine. If we lived in a homosexual society, the majority of women wouldn't want to 'get married and have children'; at least, not the way it is done now. It would be illegal to have intercourse with a man."

"Isn't that ridiculous! Isn't that absurd! Angie... please; I've had enough of this silly talk. Go back to your own room and read, or something; or call up your little playmate and tell her your weird ideas. I've had enough of them."

II

It kept coming back again and again; the weird idea, as she had termed it. She lay without sleeping, staring at the dim outline of the white lace curtain; but she kept thinking about it...The Homosexual Society. Maybe Angie was right. Maybe her Lesbianism wasn't just a 'phase.' Maybe it was something solid, real, that never would end. And there were others like Angie, she knew this. What would happen if more and more kept coming; what would happen if someday there would be a homosexual society? She tried to picture it in her mind. There would be no wedding to Bob; she would be forbidden to marry him. She

would be forbidden to kiss him in public, or to hold hands during their walks through the park. Little things, like the way they looked at each other when they met, would be frowned upon by this society. Nothing would be as it is now. She would have to wear his ring in secret, or disguised as a friendship ring. And she couldn't tell Aunt Lila about him, any more than Angie could tell her about Paula. She would have to sneak around. The very thought of sneaking around with Bob made her shudder. There was something so nasty about it, so dishonest; and yet, she knew in her heart that she would do it if she had to; if there were no other way of being with him, she knew she would sneak around. She thought of all the things that would be changed; and she remembered what Angie had said about "Heterosexual books, heterosexual movies, heterosexual billboards, even...," and she thought of these things as they would be in the new Homosexual Society. The man-and-woman relationship would be nonexistent; on covers of magazines, on billboards, on movie posters, homosexual lovers. And she and Bob? What about her relationship with Bob? How different it would be! She longed for babies...Bob's babies...but in this new society she could never openly admit that she was giving birth to Bob's children; and she could never name then "Junior;" there would be no "Junior." Childbirth would be scientific and cold. And she could never call herself: "Mrs. Robert Weston;" it would be illegal. And there would be no home-life for them. They could never live together unless they disguised their relationship. And everything she wanted would lose its honor, and its dignity, and its tradition. "Til death do us part" would belong to Angie and Paula, not to her and Bob. She turned over on her side and held the pillow close to her mouth to stifle her sobs.

III

"I've decided that you don't have to go, Angie, not if you don't want to, honey. I understand."

"Oh, Dotty...I'll go. I was a little edgy last night. I'm sorry. I really want to go, Dot. I didn't mean what I said."

"Well, it would be better all around if you did go,

Angie...but, you know, I've been giving it a lot of thought lately...I mean last night...about what you said. Angie, I don't want my happiness if you can't have yours..."

"What?"

"I mean it, Angie. I want you to be happy, too."

"Why...thank you, Dotty...but I'm happy..."

"No, you're not! You have to look at heterosexual billboards and read heterosexual books...!"

Angie laughed softly.

IV

"Hello...?"

"Hey, why don't you answer the phone when I call you...?"

"Oh...it's you, darling...I'm answering..."

"Took you long enough! Hey! Something wonderful just happened!"

"You got a raise!"

"No, Paula, you money-mad woman; something better... Dotty talked her guy, Bob, into letting us have his apartment, when he moves out next week. He's going to sublet for us, so that we can move in together; and, you know what, darling...Dotty is going to help us get started housekeeping. She says that she would feel guilty in her new apartment, if we couldn't have one, too!"

"What's the matter with Dotty? Has she gone nuts?"

"Don't talk that way about my sister."

"Oh...Angie...the last time I heard from Dotty she was grimacing whenever she heard my name mentioned; now she wants me to share an apartment with you. How come?"

"Oh...just a little something I said..."

"Something you said?"

"Yeah!"

"What?"

"Oh, something. But aren't you happy about the news, Paula?"

"Sure I am, but I'm still in a daze. Are you sure about all this?"

"Of course I'm sure. She wants us to have the apartment, and she's going to give us a wedding present!"

"What?"

"Yeah...and she's going to come over and help us re-decorate the apartment, and she says that when I give you the ring, she wants to come to our 'ceremony,' as she put it."

"What?"

"Yeah...that's what she said, Paula."

"Dotty said all that?"

"She sure did."

"Angie, have you been drinking?"

"...No!...Of course not!..."

"Well, it sure sounds like you have. Dotty couldn't have changed so drastically in the last few days."

"In just one day...overnight...because of something I said, Paula."

"Well, I don't know what it was you said, but whatever it was, it must have been terrific!"

"Yeah, I guess the idea is quite terrific, looking at it from our angle."

LESBIAN POPULATION
ON THE DECLINE?

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH ALARM IN THE LAST FEW YEARS ABOUT THE INCREASE OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN OUR SOCIETY. HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT LESBIANISM MAY BE ON THE DECLINE.

DR. ANSLEY J. COALE OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY AND A U. S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE U. N.'S POPULATION COMMISSION, RECENTLY MADE THE STATEMENT AT A DUKE UNIVERSITY SYMPOSIUM ON THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND OTHER PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD'S ONE BILLION CHILDREN THAT "SPINSTERHOOD IS DECLINING IN THE UNITED STATES" - THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO A RAPID AND POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME POPULATION GROWTH.

LESBIANA

BY GENE DAMON

193. THE BREAKWATER BY GEORGE M. HOLT. RINEHART & WINSTON, 1960.

ABOUT A FAMILY DOMINATED BY AN EVIL OLDER BROTHER WHO DESTROYS ALL OF THEIR LIVES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SISTER, JESSIE. AT 19, JESSIE FINALLY BREAKS AWAY FROM HER FAMILY AND BECOMES PART OF A GROUP OF VERY GOOD QUALITY LESBIANS: DOCTORS, CHEMISTS, LAWYERS, ETC., AND CLARA, WHO OWNS A DRESS SHOP AND BECOMES FIRST JESSIE'S EMPLOYER AND THEN HER LOVER. INCLUDES SOME VERY UPBEAT LESBIAN PROPAGANDA, BUT IN SMALL ENOUGH DOSES TO AVOID OBSCURING THE ARTISTIC VALUE.

194. DAUGHTER OF JOY BY JAMES HARVEY. NEWSSTAND LIBRARY, 1960.

STEPHANIE OLSEN PLANS A NEW "LESBOS" IN, OF ALL PLACES, A JUNGLE PARADISE. PRETTY RIDICULOUS, BUT

FULL OF FAST ADVENTURE AND FAIRLY GOOD SLICK-TYPE WRITING.

195. AMERICANA ESOTERICA BY VARIOUS AUTHORS. MACY-MACIUS, NEW YORK, 1927.

EXCELLENT OFFBEAT COLLECTION OF SHORT PIECES INCLUDING TWO OVERT MALE HOMOSEXUAL POEMS AS WELL AS THE VERY RARE LESBIAN NARRATIVE POEM, "STRANGE WATERS," BY GEORGE STERLING. ALSO INCLUDES AN EARLY LESBIAN SHORT STORY BY DJUNA BARNES ENTITLED "DUSIE". A MUST BOOK FOR THE SERIOUS COLLECTOR.

196. THE CARETAKERS BY DARIEL TELFER. SIMON & SCHUSTER, 1959; SIGNET, 1960.

MINOR LESBIAN AFFAIR IN A HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE. HANDLED WITH TACT AND SYMPATHY.

197. THE LESBIAN BY BENJAMIN MORSE. MONARCH BOOKS, 1961.

A POPULARIZED NON-FICTION PAPERBACK WHICH READS MORE LIKE A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES OR VIGNETTES THAN CASE HISTORIES. IT IS RELATIVELY GOOD OF KIND, NEITHER PARTICULARLY SYMPATHETIC NOR UNNECESSARILY VITUPERATIVE.

198. DREARY BY AMBLY BALD IN "AMERICANS ABROAD" EDITED BY PETER NEAGOE. SERVIRE PRESS, THE HAGUE (HOLLAND), 1932. (ENTIRELY IN ENGLISH.)

EXCELLENT SHORT STORY ABOUT A GROUP OF MALE AND FEMALE HOMOSEXUALS IN THE BARS AND CAFES OF PARIS. STORY REVOLVES AROUND A LESBIAN LOVE AFFAIR.

199. DEVOTED LADIES BY M. J. FARRELL (MARY LESTA SKRINE). LITTLE, BROWN, 1934.

TWO DIFFERENT VARIANT AFFAIRS MAKE UP THE BULK OF PLOT IN THIS LIGHT, BUT SUBTLY WICKED, ENGLISH NOVEL. THE HOLD JESSICA HAS OVER JANE IS FIERCE, WHILE THE LOVE "PIGGY" BEARS FOR JOAN IS BOTH SYMPATHETIC AND WELL DRAWN, ALBEIT HOPELESS. THE DENOUEMENT IN WHICH THE REJECTED, RUINED "PIGGY", IN A LAST BLIND MOMENT OF DOING GOOD FOR OTHERS, SUCCESSFULLY RELEASES JANE FROM JESSICA'S POWER IS A GEM.

READER'S RESPOND

"TOO MANY OUT-OF-TOWN READERS, I SUSPECT, SHARE GENE DAMON'S COMPLAINT (THE LADDER, SEPTEMBER): 'HOW IN H CAN I STEP CASUALLY INTO THE DOB OFFICE FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI?' OR OTHER HINTERLANDS. WITH SEVEN LEAGUE BOOTS SO HARD TO COME BY, SHE OFFERS TO FRUSTRATED COMMUTERS A SCHEDULE FOR HELPING-IN-ABSENTIA. I AGREE WITH THEM ALL, BUT POINT 6 INSPIRES ME IRREPRESSIBLY: DON'T HATE THE EDITORS FOR FAILING TO WRITE BACK. THEY SIMPLY DON'T HAVE TIME.

"ONLY A MAGAZINE WITH A LIFE-SIZE STAFF WORKING 'ROUND THE CLOCK COULD EVER COPE PERSONALLY WITH ITS CORRESPONDENCE. COPING IMPERSONALLY - BY SIMPLY REPRINTING A FEW LETTERS, WITH NO COMMENT FROM THE EDITORS - IS ONE SOLUTION. BUT IS IT GOOD FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS? SUBSCRIBERS TO THE LADDER ARE PROBABLY THE MOST DEDICATED READERS OF ALL. AS SUCH, THEY WANT TO BE HEARD - ESPECIALLY FROM A DISTANCE. AND SO I AM OFFERING THIS SUGGESTION:

"WHAT ABOUT AN OPINION POLL AS A MONTHLY FEATURE IN THE LADDER? OH, I KNOW THAT THE MAGAZINE INVITES OPINIONS FROM ANYBODY, ANY TIME, AND PRINTS THEM, IF POSSIBLE, BUT I DON'T MEAN JUST THAT. THIS IS A RATHER HAPHAZARD METHOD OF COMMUNICATION, IT SEEMS TO ME. IT LIMITS READER RESPONSE, DUE TO LACK OF PAGE SPACE AND STAFF TIME.

"SUPPOSE THAT, IN EACH ISSUE OF THE LADDER, OPINIONS WERE SOLICITED ON ONE PARTICULAR QUESTION? IT COULD BE PERSONAL OR SPECULATIVE BUT SHOULD CONCERN A MAJORITY OF SUBSCRIBERS. THESE OPINIONS COULD BE SENT TO ME DIRECTLY WITHIN A WEEK AFTER THE MAGAZINE APPEARED EACH MONTH. I WOULD POLL THE RESULTS AND CONDENSE THEM INTO A SINGLE, ONE-PAGE REPORT - IN TIME FOR THE NEXT MONTH'S LADDER. THIS WAY, EVERYONE WHO WANTED TO GET A WORD IN, COULD DO SO - IF ONLY EDGEWISE.

"TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, I AM LISTING A FEW SAMPLE QUESTIONS, ANY ONE OF WHICH MIGHT SERVE AS A THOUGHT-PROVOKER:

1. WHAT PERSONALITY TRAIT (FAULT OR VIRTUE) DO YOU CONSIDER MOST CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LESBIAN?

2. WHAT, TO YOU, IS THE 'ACCEPTABLE MODE OF DRESS AND BEHAVIOR' THAT DOB ADVOCATES BUT DOES NOT DEFINE?

3. IS THE TRAGIC THEME OF MOST HOMOSEXUAL NOVELS A REALISTIC ONE?

4. IS THE AVERAGE LESBIAN, AFTER THIRTY, MORE OR LESS CONTENTED THAN THE HETEROSEXUAL CAREER WOMAN?

5. SHOULD THE LESBIAN, ACCUSED BY HER PARENTS, ADMIT OR DENY HER INCLINATIONS?

"IS ANYBODY IN FAVOR OF AN OPINION POLL?"

E. W., FLORIDA

* * * * *

"TOMORROW, I'LL SEND YOU A BOOK OF RENEE VIVIEN 'POEMES.' LONG SINCE RENEE VIVIEN'S BOOKS HAVE NOT BEEN PUBLISHED, SO I ASK YOU TO EXCUSE ME IF THE ONE I'VE DISCOVERED IS A LITTLE DETERIORATED. IN SPITE OF THAT, I HOPE YOU'LL LIKE IT.

"THE LAST ISSUE OF PARISIAN WEEKLY 'FRANCE-DIMANCHE' HAS DEDICATED AN ARTICLE TO THE HOMOSEXUAL PROSTITUTION AND ASKED THE POLICE'S INTERVENTION.

"PERHAPS IT'S LOGICAL TO STOP THE PROSTITUTION, BUT IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, CONSIDERING THE PEOPLE'S PREJUDICES AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY, I FEAR OUR LEGISLATORS CONFUSE HOMOSEXUAL PROSTITUTION AND HOMOSEXUALITY.

"A NEW LEGISLATION WOULD BE AN AGGRAVATED LEGISLATION. IN MY OPINION, TO STRENGTHEN PEOPLE'S PREJUDICE RISKS ALSO TO CONCUR IN THE SUBSISTENCE OF THE BLACKMAILING (BLACKMAILERS ARE ONLY EXISTING BECAUSE MOB CONSIDERS THE HOMOSEXUALITY AS A 'SHAMEFUL' THING). FINALLY, A MORE SEVERE LEGISLATION RISKS TO ENCOURAGE AN ODIOUS KIND OF RACISM: THE SEXUAL RACISM.

"IT'S EVIDENT THE MAN DOES NOT CHOOSE EITHER HIS TENDENCIES OR

HIS SKIN'S COMPLEXION. ALSO IT'S EVIDENT IF THERE IS A PLACE IN WHICH MAN MUST BE ENTIRELY FREE, IT IS IN HIS OWN LIFE."

P. L., PARIS, FRANCE

* * * * *

"THE BOOK I'M ABOUT TO RECOMMEND SHOULD BE REQUIRED READING FOR ALL FEMALE HOMOSEXUALS EVERYWHERE. IT'S A STRINGENT ANTIDOTE TO THE SELF-PITY SO MANY OF THEM ARE DROWNING IN.

"SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR, IN THE SECOND SEX, WRITES A WISE, WITTY AND PERCEPTIVE BOOK. SHE EXHAUSTIVELY EXPLORES THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD SINCE TIME BEGAN, AND IN DOING SO, MANAGES TO FIND REASONS FOR ALL HER PECULIARITIES, FEARS, NEUROSES, HOPES AND TRIUMPHS.

"THE CHAPTER ON HOMOSEXUALITY HAS CONVINCED ME, AT LEAST, THAT THE CROSS UNDER WHICH WE LABOR IS OURS BY CHOICE. AND AFTER YOU'VE PLUNGED IN AND AVIDLY READ THAT CHAPTER, PLEASE DO THE AUTHOR, AND YOURSELF, THE FAVOR OF READING THE ENTIRE BOOK. BECAUSE YOU WON'T UNDERSTAND HER ARGUMENTS IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME BEFORE. AND YOU'LL CERTAINLY LEARN A LOT ALONG THE WAY.

"HOW IS IT THAT THE DOB BOOK SERVICE DOES NOT CARRY THE BANTAM BOOK EDITION WHICH IS NOW AVAILABLE?"

J. L., CALIFORNIA

* * * * *

"IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE LADDER WHICH I HAVE (MARCH, 1957), THERE IS A NOTICE REGARDING PUBLICATION OF A QUARTERLY EMBODYING THE FIRST THREE ISSUES OF THE LADDER.

"WAS THIS QUARTERLY EVER PUBLISHED? I FIND NO RECORD OF IT IN THE SUBSEQUENT LADDERS. IF IT WAS NEVER PUBLISHED, I ASSUME IT WAS A MONEY PROBLEM, THO' THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME WHO DID SEND THE 50¢ TO PAY FOR IT.

"COULD YOU SEND ME A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF THE COST TO PRINT THIS

QUARTERLY SO THOSE SUBSCRIBERS WHO, LIKE MYSELF, WISH TO HAVE A COMPLETE SET WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO?

"I AM OF COURSE INTERESTED IN EVERY PHASE OF THE ORGANIZATION, BUT PUBLICATION OF THE LADDER IS MY 'PET' AND IT IS THRILLING TO SEE IT IMPROVE AS IT CERTAINLY HAS. I WONDER IF WE WILL EVER SEE THE DAY WHEN IT WILL TAKE ITS PLACE ON THE NEWSSTANDS BESIDE THE JOURNAL, READER'S DIGEST, LOOK, TIME, AND ALL THE OTHER PUBLICATIONS WHICH ARE NOT, IN MY SLIGHTLY PREJUDICED OPINION, MORE DESERVING OF DISPLAY. I SINCERELY HOPE SO."

M. L., RHODE ISLAND

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS LETTER COULD HAVE BEEN A LITTLE MORE TICKLISH TO US HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE FACT THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS HAS "ONCE AGAIN" UNDERTAKEN THIS PROJECT. THE QUARTERLY MENTIONED IN THE LETTER HAS EXPANDED TO THE "FIRST FIVE" ISSUES OF THE LADDER. PLANS ARE UNDER WAY TO RE-PUBLISH THESE ISSUES WHICH SOME "COLLECTORS" HAVE BEEN REQUESTING. THE MATERIAL IS BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE PRINTED AS FUNDS PERMIT. FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE FORTHCOMING AS THE PROJECT PROGRESSES.

* * * * *

"MAY I SAY HOW MUCH I ENJOYED JAYE BELL'S ARTICLE IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF THE LADDER? IT WAS VERY INFORMATIVE AND DEFINITELY TO THE POINT. PERHAPS THERE ARE MANY WHO WOULD DISAGREE WITH HER - ESPECIALLY ON CONFORMITY - BUT SHE IS SO RIGHT! IT MAY SEEM STRANGE TO SUGGEST, AT LEAST, OUTWARD CONFORMITY. YET PEOPLE ARE DOING IT EVERY DAY IN THEIR 'NORMAL' WAY OF LIFE."

N. T., ILLINOIS

* * * * *

"I HAVE NOTICED THE ABSENCE OF YOUR NEW COLUMN, 'MASCULINE VIEWPOINT,' IN THE LAST COUPLE OF ISSUES OF THE LADDER. I HAVE ALSO NOTED THE ABSENCE OF LYN PEDERSEN IN THE COLUMNS OF ONE MAGAZINE. PUTTING ONE AND ONE TOGETHER, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT MR. PEDERSEN MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO PUT HIS TALENTS TO WORK FOR THE LADDER?"

M. D., CALIFORNIA

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